

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A method of operating a router in an access network
2 infrastructure connected to a plurality of service networks, comprising the steps
3 of:
4 receiving an incoming packet with a source address;
5 decapsulating the packet if the packet is encapsulated;
6 comparing the source address of the incoming packet to network
7 addresses allocated to subscribers of services provided by service networks
8 interfaced to the router and service networks not interfaced with the router;
9 if the source address matches a network address allocated to
10 subscribers of services provided by a first service network interfaced to the router,
11 forwarding the packet to a router in the first service network; and
12 if the source address matches a network address allocated to
13 subscribers of services provided by a second service network not interfaced to the
14 router, optionally encapsulate the packet and tunnel the packet to a router
15 interfaced with the second service network if there is no direct connection to the
16 router.
- 1 2. The invention of claim 1 wherein the service networks utilize
2 the Internet Protocol and wherein the addresses are Internet Protocol addresses.
- 1 3. The invention of claim 2 wherein the plurality of service
2 networks are operated by different Internet Service Providers.
- 1 4. The invention of claim 2 wherein the plurality of service
2 networks offer access to different Internet Protocol-based services.